

THE RITUAL COMPLEX OF MANGALA

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Red colour seems to have greater ritual value than white, and 822
 silk greater ritual value than cotton. For instance, at a wedding, 585
 the ceiling of the sacred central hall is covered with white cloths, 778
 except for the part just above the bridal seat which is covered with
 red cloths. All the bride's clothes are of red silk, and according to
 the ancient marriage song the groom wore a red silk gown and red
 silk turban.

When a man (or woman) dies his relatives have to carry gifts 764
 of white cotton cloths to him. But the dead man's sisters' children, 822
 or dead woman's brothers' children, have to carry gifts of red silk 778
 cloths. Those who bring gifts of red silk cloths are considered to be
 closer relatives than those who bring white cotton cloths. It is
 those who bring red silk cloths who take part, along with the dead
 man's eldest son and widow, in the important pot-breaking rite
 (*hoda kukkura*) which ritually severs the dead man's connexion
 with his living relatives.

The ritual preference of silk to cotton is widespread all over 778
 peninsular India among Brahmins, and it is very likely that Coorgs 171
 borrowed the use of red silk from the Brahmins of the west coast.
 The use of red silk in ritual is not very clearly defined—at least it
 is not as clearly defined as the use of the white gown.

The turban is worn on very important auspicious occasions like 291
 a wedding. On less formal occasions a Coorg ties a scarf round his 576
 head. Both men and women tie a scarf round their heads out of
 doors. But no form of head-dress, turban, scarf, or cap, is worn 764
 inside the house. When a kinswoman comes into the house the
 hostess removes her scarf. Failure to do so would be an insult, as it
 would amount to treating the kinswoman as a stranger. Absence
 of head-dress indicates the intimacy that prevails among the mem-
 bers of a household. It is presumably for this reason that everyone,
 including the senior mourners, has to remove his scarf and
 sandals before the corpse. Such removal shows that the dead man
 and mourners are members of one household. They are kindred, [602]
 and kinship is intimacy. When two people are able to appear before
 each other without scarves they are intimate, they are members of
 the same household. It is an expression of the solidarity prevalent
 between the two.

There is a great social and ritual elaboration of the distinction 589
 between a married woman and a widow. A married woman or
garati is one whose first and only husband is alive. Remarried